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Resistance to birth control in East Timor

A statement made recently by Dr Haryono Suyono, head of Indonesia's Family Planning Institute (BKKBN), to East Timorese Catholic priests indicates that East Timorese women are resisting pressure by the authorities to practise birth control.

He is reported to have agreed with the two priests, Mariono Soares and Yoseph Capital, who were on a visit to Jakarta, that the programme in East Timor would be based on natural methods acceptable to the Catholic Church.

Sup SVD Indonesios

Dr Haryono also revealed that the death rate among women during pregnancy and child-birth in East Timor is excessively high, at 20 to 25 per cent. [The sentence containing this astronomical figure says 'in Indonesia', but this is clearly a mis-print as the rest of the news item is devoted entirely to East Timor.]

He had been told by the priests that East Timorese women do not want to wear the spiral or take the pill, a clear sign of resistance to the government's programme. His response was to tell the priests that the government would use a 'special approach' in East Timor, relying on the Catholic Church to inform women about natural birth control and to convince people to get married later. The chief birth-control bureaucrat claimed that this special approach was necessary to help improve the health of mothers and babies in East Timor where mortality rates are particularly high.

[Merdeka, 19 May 1987]

Birth control targets increased

Within weeks of these assurances to East Timorese priests, the East Timor office of the BKKBN announced that it was raising the target for its programme in the territory. It intends by March 1988 to reach a target of 7,000 new participants so as to reach a total of 11,000 active participants.

In the offensively clinical jargon of the birth-control bureaucracy, this would represent a participation of around 13 per cent of the 80,000 'fertile-age' couples in East Timor, which is still below the target for first-stage implementation of the programme. Birth control in East Timor is still at this first stage when the programme is targetted to involve 15 per cent of child-bearing couples.

In stark contrast to Dr Haryono's talk about a 'special approach' in East Timor, this news report from Dili shows that the government-sponsored programme under which women must use methods advocated by the BKKBN is to press ahead regardless of any promises to East Timorese priests. Programme targets are measured purely in terms of the number of women acceptors of the spiral or the pill.

[Merdeka, 2 June 1987]

US Catholic Church condemns birth control in East Timor as genocide

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The rest is from a document you already have!